

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 CIAE-00
INR-07 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05
OES-07 DODE-00 ERDA-05 SS-15 SP-02 PM-05 H-01
PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 /122 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:RKMCKEE/PWLANDE/MW
APPROVED BY NEA - MR. ATHERTON
PM - MR. OPLINGER
:UR/WE - MR. BEIGEL
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM
OES-MS. COON
NSC - MR. THORNTON(DRAFT)
NEA/IRN - MR. NAAS
NEA - MR. DUBS S/S-O:TGMARTIN
NEA - MR. SOBER

-----016212 301125Z /21

R 291724Z JUL 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 178136

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MNUC, PK, FR

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING: APPROACH TO SAUDI
ARABIAN GOVERNMENT

1. BEGIN FYI: AS YOU ARE AWARE, WE HAVE FOR SOME TIME
BEEN ATTEMPTING TO PERSUADE THE GOP OF THE DESIRABILITY OF
CANCELLING/INDEFINITELY POSTPONING ITS PLANS TO IMPLEMENT
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A CONTRACT WITH FRANCE TO PURCHASE A NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESS-
ING ,LANT. WE HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED THIS PROBLEM WITH FRANCE
AND IRAN.

2. AMBASSADOR HUMMEL RECENTLY CALLED ON CHIEF MARTIAL
LAW ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL ZIA REQUESTING THAT THE INTERIM
GOVERNMENT CONSIDER POSTPONEMENT OF SENSITIVE EQUIPMENT
DELIVERIES DURING ITS TENURE, THUS AVOIDING APPLICATION OF THE
SYMINGTON AMENDMENT. SUCH A DECISION WOULD AVOID JEOPARDIZ-
ING U.S.-PAKISTANI RELATIONS AND LEAVE ALL OPTIONS OPEN

FOR THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT CHOSEN AT THE POLLS IN EARLY OCTOBER. THE MLA HAS FORMALLY REJECTED THE USG REQUEST AS INCONSISTENT WITH ITS LIMITED MANDATE AS AN INTERIM CARETAKER GOVERNMENT. INFORMALLY, PAKISTANI OFFICIALS POINTED OUT THAT ANY DECISION TO DELAY WOULD OPEN THE MLA TO CRITICISM FROM FORMER PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO, WHO NEEDS A WINNING CAMPAIGN ISSUE.

3. FOLLOWING OUR CONVERSATION WITH IRAN, THE SHAH URGED VISITING PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL (DE FACTO FOREIGN MINISTER) AGHA SHAHI THAT THE MLA SHOULD "DRAG ITS FEET" ON REPROCESSING EQUIPMENT DELIVERIES. AGHA SHAHI GAVE THE SAME REPLY WE HAD RECEIVED.

4. IT IS CLEAR FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS THAT THEY ARE NOT HAPPY WITH THEIR ARRANGEMENT WITH PAKISTAN, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF CURRENT POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY THERE. HOWEVER, WHILE THE GOF WOULD WELCOME GOP CANCELLATION, IT IS NOT PREPARED ITSELF TO CANCEL THE ARRANGEMENT. THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER DELAYS IN SHIPMENT IS STILL BEING CONSIDERED.

5. THE COST OF THE PLANT (DOLS 150-200 MILLION) IS NOT SO CONFIDENTIAL

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LARGE THAT THE GOP COULD NOT AFFORD IT BY ITSELF OR WITH FRENCH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BUT THE GOP IS CERTAINLY SEEKING BROAD FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM SAUDI ARABIA WHICH WOULD INDIRECTLY OR DIRECTLY FACILITATE THIS PURCHASE.

6. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SAUDI ARABIA. THE STRENGTH OF RELIGIOUS, FINANCIAL, AND OTHER TIES BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND SAUDI ARABIA IS INCREASED AT PRESENT NOT ONLY BY GENERAL ZIA'S WIDELY PUBLICIZED PIETY BUT ALSO BY SAUDI ARABIA'S MEDIATORY ROLE IN OBTAINING THE AGREEMENT OF PAKISTANI POLITICIANS TO THE ELECTION TIMETABLE WHICH GENERAL ZIA IS PLEDGED TO FOLLOW. END FYI

7. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE FACTORS WE THINK TIME HAS COME TO BRING SAUDIS INTO PICTURE AND HAVE CONSIDERED MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF SEEKING THEIR ASSISTANCE. WE HAVE DECIDED TO GO BACK TO SHAH AND SUGGEST HE RAISE THIS ISSUE WITH SAUDIS ASKING SAG TO JOIN HIS INTERVENTION WITH GOP. WE BELIEVE THIS APPROACH HAS MERIT OF KEEPING THE INTERVENTION ESSENTIALLY AMONG ISLAMIC NEIGHBORS WHILE SIGNALLING OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IRANIAN-SAUDI COOPERATION IN REGIONAL CONCERNS.

8. FOR JIDDA: YOU SHOULD PROCEED TO BRIEF SAG ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

-- PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ACCORDED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO LIMITING THE DANGER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION, WHICH POSES A THREAT TO THE PEACE AND STABILITY OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. IN THIS REGARD, WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT BOTH MOTIVATIONS AND CAPABILITIES TO MAKE NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THE CAPACITY TO REPROCESS SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL PERMITS A COUNTRY TO SEPARATE OUT PURE PLUTONIUM WHICH CAN READILY BE DIVERTED TO A WEAPONS PROGRAM. THE U.S. ITSELF IS SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED OVER THE PROLIFERATION RISKS OF RE-
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PROCESSING SO THAT, EVEN THOUGH WE ARE A NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATE, THE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED TO DEFER INDEFINITELY COMMERCIAL REPROCESSING IN THE U.S. WHILE WE SEEK OTHER SAFER ALTERNATIVES.

-- THE USG HAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED TO PAKISTAN ITS OPPOSITION TO THE FULFILLMENT OF THEIR CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING PLANT. THE USG HAS OFFERED TO BE RESPONSIVE TO PAKISTAN'S LEGITIMATE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, NUCLEAR AND HYDROELECTRIC ENERGY, AND SECURITY NEEDS. WIDE-RANGING BILATERAL COOPERATION IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONCE THE REPROCESSING ISSUE IS RESOLVED.

-- FROM AN ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW, THE REPROCESSING PLANT MAKES NO SENSE FOR PAKISTAN. ALTHOUGH SEPARATED PLUTONIUM CAN BE RECYCLED AS FUEL IN POWER REACTORS OR USED IN MORE ADVANCED BREEDER REACTORS (IF AND WHEN THEY BECOME COMMERCIALLY OPERATIONAL), WE ESTIMATE THAT A COUNTRY NEEDS PROBABLY 50 POWER UNITS OF ONE THOUSAND MEGAWATS EACH TO JUSTIFY THE CAPITAL AND CONTINUING OPERATING COSTS OF A REPROCESSING PLANT. EVEN THE MOST FAR-OUT PROJECTIONS OF THE GOP'S NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM WOULD NOT JUSTIFY A REPROCESSING FACILITY ON ECONOMIC GROUNDS. THE ONLY LOGICAL CONCLUSION IS THAT GOP'S PURPOSE IN CONTRACTING FOR THE FRENCH PLANT WAS TO DEVELOP A NUCLEAR WEAPONS OPTION.

-- IF PAKISTAN GOES AHEAD WITH THE REPROCESSING PLANT, THE USG WILL BE FORBIDDEN BY LAW (THE SYMINGTON AMENDMENT) FROM SIGNING ANY NEW ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS. ALTHOUGH OUR LEGISLATION DOES NOT PREVENT US FROM CONTINUING MILITARY SALES, THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION BUT THAT SUCH SALES, WHICH REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, WOULD BECOME
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INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT. THE OVERALL RESULT WOULD BE A CONFRONTATION IN PAKISTAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

-- THE ONLY BENEFICIARIES OF SUCH A CONFRONTATION WOULD BE

THOSE INDIVIDUALS AND COUNTRIES WHICH SEEK A REALIGNMENT OF PAKISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION AWAY FROM THE U.S. AND THE WEST AND TOWARD THE OPPOSITE POLITICAL POLE.

-- FINAL RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM COULD AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE OCTOBER ELECTION, BUT SHIPMENT OF KEY REPROCESSING EQUIPMENT ITEMS SHOULD BE STOPPED FOR NOW, SO AS NOT TO PREJUDICE THE SITUATION.

-- WE HAVE RAISED OUR CONCERN WITH IRAN AND WITH FRANCE. THE IRANIANS SHARE OUR VIEW THAT THE PAKISTANIS SHOULD NOT GO AHEAD WITH THE REPROCESSING PLANT AND HAVE ATTEMPTED TO PERSUADE THE GOP (THUS FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS) AT LEAST TO POSTPONE DELIVERIES. THE FRENCH APPRECIATE THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN THE TRANSACTION BUT ARE UNWILLING TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION TO CANCEL THE SALE OR DELAY SHIPMENTS.

-- RECOGNIZING SAUDI ARABIA'S KEY ROLE IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND CLOSE RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN, WE WANT TO SHARE OUR CONCERN WITH YOU AND TO SEEK YOUR ADVICE ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM OF MUTUAL INTEREST.

9. FOR TEHRAN: YOU SHOULD INFORM THE SHAH THAT, AS HE SUGGESTED, WE ARE BRIEFING THE SAG FULLY ON OUR CONCERN RE PAKISTAN REPROCESSING. YOU SHOULD SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THE GOI WOULD INTERCEDE WITH THE SAG TO OBTAIN THE LATTERS' COOPERATION IN APPROACHES TO THE GOP.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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